

MSFC Safety *Bulletin*

Loss of Consciousness in Autoclave

What Happened?

- While conducting non-NASA related activities, employees were having difficulty performing pressure and vacuum leak checks at a MSFC contractor autoclave.
- The employee turned off the pressurization, opened the door halfway, listened and looked for an alarm before entering the autoclave to investigate.
- After entering approximately 40 feet, the employee felt faint due to lack of Oxygen and tried to exit. A co-worker outside the autoclave heard the employee fall, ran in and pulled the employee out. Fortunately, the employee did regain consciousness and both the employee and rescuer survived this incident.
- This was a “very” close call! *
- The lack of a failsafe hazard monitoring system and improper procedures and the employee opening the autoclave door only halfway were identified as causes of this incident.



What Can Be Done?

Additional warning lights and alarms, procedure changes, retraining, and use of portable O2 sensors are being implemented to keep this from recurring.

* This is not a NASA reportable mishap, as it occurred during non-NASA activity. This bulletin is intended to transmit word of the event and help preclude occurrence at MSFC.